

The Garden Design Co Ltd

www.gardendesignco.co.uk

2012/2013 NEWSLETTER



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WATER WATER EVERYWHERE

Who can believe that the Government announced a drought in March, for we all know what happened next. Fortunately with 20 years of expertise we were able to survive the drought, installing leaky hoses which were still permitted, and topping up mulches. With the deluge of rain that followed we were delighted at how newly planted trees and hedging thrived. Ironically though despite the rain, ponds and streams featured heavily in the wish lists of several of our clients. Designing, building and maintaining them and indeed restoring them is a true art, which many contractors shy away from. Looking back on them I hope that you agree that the stories inside amply demonstrate what pleasure our creations can bring and how they simply ooze professionalism, a quality that sets us apart and why we enjoy such a loyal following. Enjoy!

But before you do, thank you to my very loyal band of clients, suppliers, and most importantly the superb team that sits behind the Company who collectively provide the reason as to why we are still here after 20 years. The lads and lasses who toil through all weathers, the designers whose flair is so inspirational, the backoffice staff who source and buy the stock as well as the book keepers and IT personnel who provide such wonderful support, for without them there would be nothing to enjoy, thank you.

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UNLOVED SCRUB

FROM WASTELAND...

WATER WATER EVERYWHERE...

I had long since expressed the concern after 2 exceptionally dry winters, that when the rain came, it would come big time. And hence within days of the Governments Drought order banning hosepipes in March, we experienced the wettest season ever. To be fair it probably impacted upon the public more than us, for we are used to working in all weathers and juggling tasks so that we kept off the soil when the ground was really saturated. But trees and shrubs have grown so well and nursery prices are keener than ever as the general public people shied away from planting, such that nursery and garden centre sales are down record amounts.

And all this moisture inevitably increased fungal diseases, such as Box Blight and helped spread Ash Dieback as well as encouraging slugs so for many the need for professional advice proved greater than ever. With 20 years of expertise, chemicals for us are always a weapon of last resort, but the targeted use of these and biological agents have been used to great effect against the likes of Vine Weevil and Slugs, despite the weather.

Nevertheless we do still have a love affair with water and indeed water in a garden is truly special. In last years newsletter we profiled the work in progress in Caversham as we created a wildlife pond from unloved scrub. Twelve months on the transformation is dramatic.

A duck house was bought as a wedding present, though there is a conflict here with Mr Fox, but we have been on hand to deal biologically with Blanket weed and to blitz the garden and meadow as winter sets in, with more wild flower plugs being planted in December to give the meadow an added boost for the next season, for the sharply draining gravel found here was challenging even in a wet year.



...TO
WATER LAND

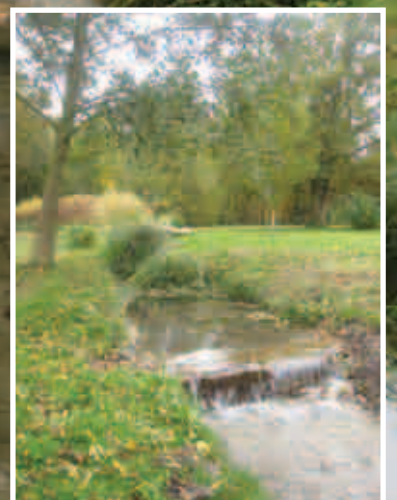
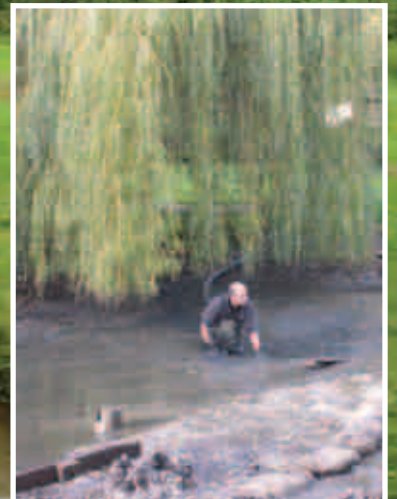
WATER RESTORATION

Garden Restoration is an art that is often overlooked. A 'clean sheet' created by a man and a digger is rarely the answer, and certainly not when a mature garden is to be tackled. For years I had admired the beautiful Gardens of a former Mill House in Oxfordshire. 5 acres of garden included one acre of water, and a Roman Rill linking chalk fed streams to the Thames.

But these streams were under threat as the DIY waterfalls made from railway sleepers had long since collapsed with the banks now being eroded. Meanwhile a large pond had become poisoned with years of accumulated silt and sediment such that it supported little or no flora or fauna.

An ambitious plan to isolate the stream and drain the pond was put in place. Footings were dug for the new weirs but natural springs erupted throughout the workings to then wash away some of the footings. We had up to 3 commercial pumps working 24 hours a day to stem to flow, and eventually we won and the natural stone weirs were built. But the pond literally sucked in our digger and refused to let go so plan B involved sucking out the sediment, the equivalent of 7 skips. A marginal shelf was established and planted up with over 500 marginal plants and finished off with a green oak jetty providing an enticing place to sit and wish.

The fruits of our labour will only be evident when the planting gets growing next season, but the sense of anticipation is so exciting as we look forward with the clients to seeing the results of this inspired restoration.



OUR NEXT NEW VENTURE...

www.treeandgardengiftcompany.co.uk

The Tree and Garden Gift Company was bought about by requests from customers, wanting something that little bit different for a special occasion gift. Our new site will feature an illustrated master list of trees, from which customers will be able to; purchase a gift, create their own gift list for a special occasion or simply visit the shop to purchase a vast range of bare rooted trees.

And uniquely, the price includes the cost of supplying and planting the trees.

The whole process has been designed to be straightforward and easy to use. Once your order has been placed you will receive a pack that gives you a range of beautiful accompaniments to the trees, such as pegs to mark out where you would like your trees to go and copper name plaques for each of the trees.

A lot of thought has gone into this to not only make it an incredibly user friendly process but also provide a unique and pleasurable experience. We think we have it all wrapped up!

GIFT LIST

So if you don't need new pots and pans or you just want to be that little bit different, we have the ideal gift list. Populated with over 80 different varieties of trees it is not hard to find exactly what you want.

CREATE A GIFT LIST

The incredibly powerful search function can also create lists of trees that are ideally suited for your particular garden whether your garden be small or large, windswept or prone to water logging. You can search on colour, fruit, flower, soil type, position, height, spread and even which trees are best at removing pollution from the atmosphere!

REGISTER YOUR LIST

Celebration details

Event type

Wedding

Civil Partnership

Engagement

Birthday

Blessing

Christening

Retirement

Other

Date of event

12 / 09 / 12

N.B. Your list will open to your guests 8 weeks prior to your event

Address for delivery of list

Same as registration address

Post code

House number

Find address

Street

NEXT

You can personalize your list, change it, update it add and remove items, see what has already been bought and priorities your trees according to preference.

Once the gift list has been created, your guests can then pledge to buy or contribute towards the cost of your trees, which will then be supplied and planted by us, with our 20 years of horticultural expertise.

It is unique and flexible and we really have tried to think of everything. Of course if you would like help planning your list we are more than happy to help.

SHOP

Our online shop will have the same powerful search facility as the giftlist, meaning that you can find exactly what you want quickly and easily.

The trees we supply will be top quality and in good health. We will instruct you in every aspect of after care and of course with us doing the planting you know that they will flourish.

So what better way to start the fight back against the ravages of the likes of Ash die back and the other diseases currently threatening so many of our native trees.



A GIFT FOR EVERY OCCASION!

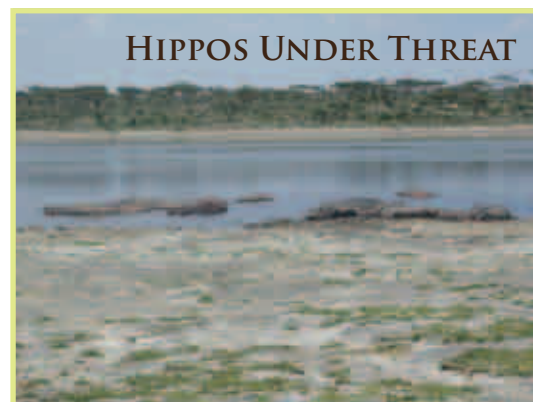
A great alternative to more traditional gifts for Weddings, Christenings, Birthdays, Retirements, Anniversaries and anything in between. Trees will be sorted into categories specific to that special occasion for which you want to find the perfect gift.



NEW TRENDS

During the last few years there have been very few gardens where fruit and vegetables have not featured. Raised beds made from Green Oak sleepers often provide a great answer so that the beds are easy to work and maintain, warm up quicker in the Spring and produce more crops per m2 and of course can easily be divided between family members. And of course oak needs no chemical preservative and will still outlast us all.

But with 90% of our cut flowers being imported from developing countries such as Kenya and in particular around Lake Nevasha, and the resultant use of water, a very precious commodity in the area, lake levels have dropped by 3m, endangering the local hippos and fishing industry.



HIPPOS UNDER THREAT



AFTER

BEFORE

FROM FORMER SWIMMING POOL TO CUT FLOWER GARDEN

So I was really excited to be asked to design a cut flower garden last year. Planted in the depths of winter, the beds feature disease resistant fragrant roses with long stems such as the scented Princess Alexandra of Kent and Winchester Cathedral. Planted together with sweet peas, Eryngiums, paeonys and exotic Namaqualand daisies all are designed to be ideal for cutting. Several of the beds will be dominated by annuals and uniquely these will be cultivated by us in our own greenhouse. The project is a real challenge, to answer the call for an attractive cutting garden, that will provide flower and foliage for many months, but the ability to rise to such a challenge is what sets us apart from so many others.

ANIMALS IN THE GARDEN

My daughter Charlotte is obsessed by animals, so my garden is the subject of free range Chickens, pigs (well guinea pigs) and the chocolate lab Franco. But whilst animals might not feature in many Garden Design Articles, they cannot be ignored for they do bring much pleasure into a garden.

Indeed when doing a photo shoot with Marnie Moyle of Green Oak Furniture, Franco and Marnies dog Sparticus added so much life to this stunning bespoke bench that Marnie has created.



Meanwhile Hettie and Katie have been most welcoming to Franco during the 2 years that we have been working on their garden in Amersham, posing whenever the need arose.

So morale of the story, don't forget the animals!



THE COTSWOLD CHOCOLATE BOX

Hidden from view by years of unloved Conifers, previous clients of The Garden Design Company had bought a classic Chocolate Box of a cottage in the Cotswolds. This time there was little of merit to restore or retain, so a scorched earth policy was instead the answer. Twelve months later the transformation for the delighted clients has proved to be overwhelming with photos arriving via e mail almost on a weekly basis.



Being a front garden, it's in full view of horse riders, ramblers and locals alike so much so that Mike the owner has now been invited to join the local gardening club, so he is desperately trying to learn those latin plant names!

And the funny thing is that the garden only took a week to build, albeit the days were long!



AFTER



WINTER AND SUMMER SALE

Faced with often turning work away or at least delaying its start during the busy Spring and Autumn we wanted to at the same time help our clients save money by bringing in our first ever sale! Unlike supermarket offers, this one is really simple. We just deduct 5% from any of our quotes for any of the work that we undertake in December and January and July and August. But we can only take on so much work, so it's first come first served, so if you are sitting on a quote.....



TESTIMONIALS; WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT US

With our business relying almost entirely on recommendation and repeat business its worth reflecting on what has been said of us this year;

- *'I wanted a cottage garden and I got one. Paid for by cashing some of my ISA's. At least this investment is growing. Pays to use the professionals!'*
Mike F of Gloucestershire.
- *'Everything that has been done has been first class'* DD of Oxfordshire
- *'From the start of the design process everyone associated with this project has been professional, enthusiastic and hard working. The transformation from 'Jungle' to stunning wildlife pond plus our 'wedding' cherry trees and wild flowers has been amazing. We really couldn't have asked for more and are delighted with the results'* LL of Berkshire

REST IN PEACE; KEN A TRULY GREAT GARDENER

The 5 acre gardens that we helped to create some 10 years ago at Brook House, have long been one of the most impressive of our creations. Opened to the public for only the second time in 2012, one of the main reasons for them continuing to look so stunning was down to the professionalism of former Head Gardener Ken Piddington.

Sadly he passed away last year after a long battle with cancer, but the stripes that he mowed and edges that he cut will forever be etched in my memory. Once a garden is created, we are always on hand to help, advise and blitz the garden, but the gardens' day to day maintenance is always a potential problem, unless you are blessed to have a Ken, for there are not many about. Thanks Ken.

